



## Senate Approves First Time Funding for Major California Crops

November 3, 2005

**Washington, DC** -- The Senate today approved a \$100.981 billion FY 2006 agriculture appropriations spending bill, which includes \$7 million to fund the new specialty crops block grant program, marking the first time that Congress has provided funding dedicated to such major California crops as oranges, peaches, grapes, avocados, almonds and dates.

The House-Senate Conference report also includes millions of dollars for research into ways to eradicate invasive pests including the Glassy-Winged sharpshooter, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced.

**“For the first time ever, Congress has now passed legislation that provides funds dedicated for specialty crops,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“This \$7 million will help ensure that we can improve the competitiveness of U.S. specialty crops and create a safer and more secure domestic food supply. It also establishes an important precedent that recognizes the importance of these crops to California and the nation.”**

**“Americans tend to forget that California is the largest agricultural producing state in the nation,”** Senator Feinstein continued. **“Of the top ten agricultural producing counties nationwide, eight are located in California. We export more crops than any other state, and I am proud to say that 97 percent of our farms are family owned.”**

Specialty crops are fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops, including floriculture. Specific specialty crops include grapes, lettuce, almonds, strawberries, flowers, tomatoes, broccoli, oranges, carrots, avocados, walnuts, lemons, peaches, persimmons, prunes, raisins, artichokes, figs, olives, pistachios and pomegranates.

**“Farms in the Golden State produce more than half of the nation’s fruits, vegetables and nuts from just 3 percent of the nation’s farmland. While California accounts for about 13 percent of national cash receipts from agriculture, it receives only about 3 percent of direct government payments to agriculture. These funds, while open to all fifty states, will help California specialty crop farmers,”** Senator Feinstein said.

**“As the globalization of markets continues, it is becoming increasingly difficult for U.S. producers to compete against heavily subsidized foreign producers in both the domestic and foreign markets. U.S. specialty crop producers also continue to face serious tariff and non-tariff trade barriers in many export markets. These funds will promote the marketing of specialty crops and improve access to foreign markets and competitiveness.”**

The FY2006 Agriculture Appropriations Conference Report was approved by the House last month and now goes to President for signature. It also includes the following items of interest to California:

- \$200 million for the Market Access Program
- \$3.65 million for the Grape Genomics Research Center, Davis ARS Station
- \$3.65 million for construction at the ARS Station at Salinas
- \$20 million for the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- \$1 million for the California County High Risk Pest Exclusion Program
- \$1.35 million for the California County Pest Detection Augmentation Program
- \$24.25 million for the Glassy-winged Sharpshooter / Pierce's Disease Control Program
- \$3.076 million for the Sudden Oak Death Control Program
- \$6 million for Hispanic Education Partnership Grants
- \$1 million for the California State Universities Agricultural Research Initiative
- \$300,000 for UC Davis and CSU Fresno Air Quality research
- \$2.211 million for Pierce's Disease Research at the University of California
- \$1.929 million for Exotic Pest Disease Research at the University of California
- \$401,000 for Ozone Air Quality Research by the San Joaquin Valleywide Air Pollution Study Agency
- \$2.1 million for the Viticulture Consortium
- \$200,000 to the Municipal Water District of Orange County Irrigation Controller Installation Program
- \$600,000 for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary
- \$1 million for East Valley Conservation District/Santa Ana Watershed Authority non-native plant removal

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